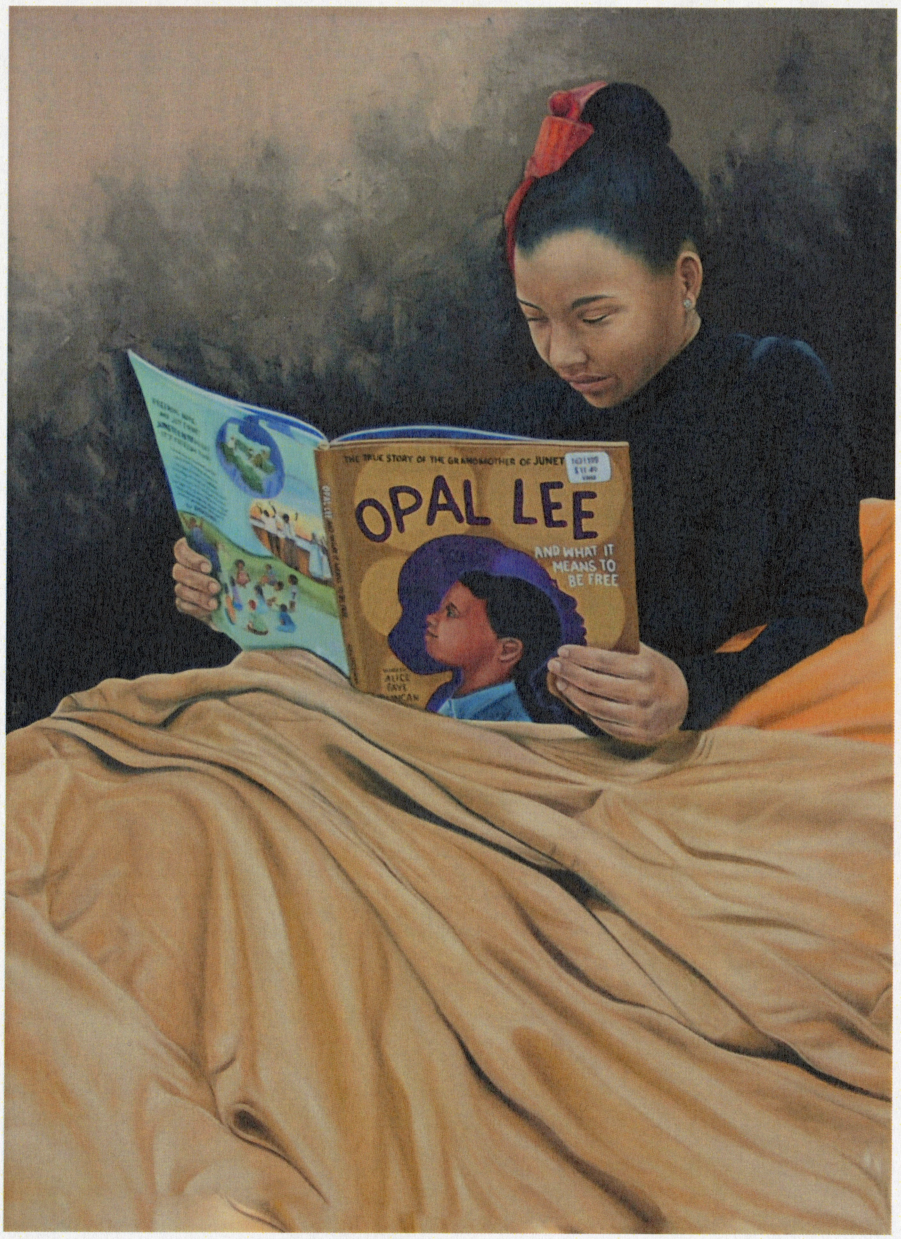

SHADES OF HERITAGE

by WILEY HENRY

EAST GALLERY
03 / 13 / 26 – 06 / 07 / 26

CROSSTOWN ARTS

CROSSTOWN ARTS | 1350 Concourse Ave. | Suite 280 | **crosstownarts.org**

ARTIST STATEMENT

The exhibition, titled Shades of Heritage, features a curated selection of paintings and drawings that collectively reflect my identity, artistic perspective, and creative approach. Through these works, I aim to express my intentions and objectives, utilizing the human form and underscoring the integral role of heritage within my artwork. It captivates me in ways that enables me to depict human form on canvas or Strathmore paper with relative ease — for I am who I am because of my heritage.

Moreover, I wouldn't be the artist that I am today without my upbringing in a household with my parents and seven siblings, divine intervention, and the ordering of my footsteps. While this is not a religious exhibition, I often find myself drawn to spiritual themes, occasionally depicting gatherings of Black Angels and children in various celestial settings — for such angelic beings have been depicted by artists of every stripe for eons.

History is another area that piques my intellectual curiosity. I am particularly interested in representing pioneering Black men and women, as well as other historical figures, whose achievements have left lasting legacies and inspire future generations. I regard history as a vital component of my artistic journey and believe it is, in part, an artist's mission to document it using any available technique and medium.

While subject matter is germane in creating a work of art, the technique used to capture the essence of it is just as important. I've worked in several media, but I prefer rendering subjects in oil on canvas using the minutest of brush strokes and colors that resonate for effect. This is the same approach I use for charcoal drawings on paper using a technique called chiaroscuro (contrasting light and shadow).

Upon completion of a work of art, viewers are invited into the space for close observation and critical examination. There is a story behind every creation. However, what compels one artist to reach deep within for inspiration may differ from the next artist. For me, I try to capture the spirit of the subject and strive to frame it with as much grace, beauty, and meaning as I can muster.

The paintings and drawings in this exhibition also serve as a visual documentation of my life experiences and represent decades of artistic development in portraiture, illustration, figurative painting, and more. Shades of Heritage is, therefore, my offering to art enthusiasts, art collectors, and the inquiring public. There is beauty in all art. I choose humanity as my subject.

To purchase a piece in the exhibition please contact Stacy Wright at stacy@crosstownarts.org.

100% of all proceeds go to the artist.

ARTIST BIO

Wiley Henry is a noted artist, journalist, author, and photographer whose artwork has been marketed locally and nationally in the form of prints and reproductions. He has been commissioned to paint portraits of noted individuals such as judges, attorneys, actors, businessmen, politicians, entertainers, activists, mayors, etc. One of his portraits, Madame C. J. Walker, once hung in the governor's mansion in Indiana. He also created a 21-piece charcoal portrait series of historical African-American religious pioneers and inventors; a 10-piece Christmas card series that was marketed nationwide in 250 K-mart stores and other outlets; a four-card Christmas series that was marketed regionally; 10 pen and ink drawings of historical African-Americans for Leader Federal Bank's "African-American Check Series"; a 6'x9' life-sized mural in the home of businessman Lynn Spearman; eight posters for the annual Juneteenth festival (now a federal holiday); a 4'x10' mural of the Memphis Chicks baseball team for local business mogul Avron Fogelman; a statewide poster for The Tennessee Arts Commission in Nashville; and posters for the Memphis Chapter of LINKS, Memphis Urban League, WLOK Radio Station's Stone Soul Picnic, The Kroger Stores, and more.

The artist's roots run deep in the rich soil of Memphis and Shelby County, where Henry was born and raised. He has cultivated a style of painting utilizing traditional realism. With his uncanny ability to capture the human spirit — or the essence thereof — his artwork takes on a life of its own. With his attention to detail and his use of a colorful palette, the artist's paintings and drawings often elicit positive responses from viewers.

Henry has carved out a niche for himself in the art world — the result of his innate ability to grasp oil painting techniques and the intricacies of fundamental design — space, form, line, shape, color, texture, and balance. He was formally trained at the Memphis College of Art, where he graduated in 1980 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

Henry has received several awards and honors, including the 2024 Best Adult Nonfiction award for his book, "Daddy: A.C. Williams Jr. and His Teen Town Singers; 2019 Harriet Tubman Living Legends Award; 2019 International Educators Hall of Fame inductee in Anaheim, Calif.; 2018 Civil Rights Humanitarian "EBEN" Award; 2018 The Tennessee Tribune's "Man of the Year"; 2009 Memphis Living Legends Award; 2002 Lincoln University's 49th Annual Unity Awards National Winner; 2001 Phillip Randolph Messenger Awards National Winner; and Society of Professional Journalists awards in 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, and other awards and citations.

1 *The Mime*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,000

2 *Rev. William Barber:*
Back to Selma
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$20,000

3 *They Fought for Dignity and Respect*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$2,500

4 *What it Means to be Free*
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$18,000

5 *Ode to Maxine Smith*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,600

6 *Grandma's Quilt*
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$18,000

7 *Sweet Baby*
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
$3,200

8 *Little Boy, Blow Your Horn*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,100

9 *Drumbeat of the Ancestors*
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$14,000

10 *Celebration*
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$12,000

11 *Da Bishop*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,000

12 *Min. Suhkara A. Yahweh*
(a.k.a. Sweet Willie Wine)
Oil on Canvas
20 x 24 inches
NFS

13 *Dale Long: Remembering his Friends*
Oil on canvas
48 x 48 inches
$14,000

14 *Ode to Mother Georgia King*
Oil on Canvas
20 x 24 inches
$3,000

15 *Ascension*
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
$3,000

16 *Triumph*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$2,700

17 *The Comforter*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,400

18 *The Messenger*
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
$3,000

19 *B.J. and the Butterfly*
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 inches
$3,000

20 *Corner Pocket*
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
$5,500

21 *A Boy's Friendship With Nature #2*
Charcoal and Pencil
22 x 28 inches
$1,300

22 *Amelia Boynton Robinson:*
Back to Selma
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
$27,000

23 *Choir Boys*
Charcoal and Pencil
22 x 28 inches
$1,400

24 *Jonah was Swallowed By a Fish This Big*
Charcoal and Pencil
22 x 28 inches
$1,600

25 *Love Thy Mother*
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
$3,000

26 *Ode to Angela Davis*
Oil on Canvas
18 x 24 inches
$2,000

27 *Ode to Martha Jean Steinberg*
Oil on Canvas
18 x 24 inches
$2,000

28 *A.C. "Moohah" Williams*
Canvas Print
18 x 24 inches
$450

29 *Ode to Miriam Decosta Willis*
Oil on Canvas
18 x 24 inches
$2,000

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